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SUMMARY OF NEWS.

FOREIGN. — England.—The House of Commons, elected under the late reform bill, met Dec. 15th, and adjourned to the 29th inst. to give time for elections in the case of members who had accepted office under the new government, of which Gladstone is Premier, and John Bright a member of the cabinet. Bright was offered the Secretaryship of India, but declined as too severe for his health, and because the country's views respecting Indian policy are too much below his own. The recent election has given the Liberals a majority of more than one hundred over the Conservatives in the Commons, and thus insures a full and easy triumph of their views. From all the developments during the late canvass, it was quite apparent that pacific sentiments had made decided progress. The election to Parliament by a nearly unanimous vote of our friend and co-worker, Rev. HENRY RICHARD, Secretary of the London Peace Society, is an event of marked and very hopeful significance in respect to the change in England on the peace question.

The controversy pending between ourselves and England, growing out of her course towards us during the late rebellion, still remains in a state of much uncertainty. Our minister had publicly declared that Lord Clarendon is of the same mind as Lord Stanley in regard to the settlement of the questions pending between us, and that peace between the two countries is certain. It must, however, be remembered that any arrangement in the nature of a treaty, will require ratification by our Senate before it can be effective. It seems now doubtful whether such ratification can be secured. The *London Times* of a later date speaks in a long editorial on the uneasy feeling in both countries on the subject, but reaches the conclusion, that all the points involved in the case will be finally and amicably settled under the incoming administration of General Grant.

The Continent.—The Emperor of Austria, in a late manifesto to his army, says, "*The country wants peace, which we must maintain. Austria and Hungary are now equally interested in the grandeur and security of the empire.*" Count Bismark, too, says on behalf of Prussia, "*The fears of war which were prevalent during the summer, have now passed away.*" In France, also, the clouds or mists of war seem giving way to the sunshine of peace. A partial reorganization of the French cabinet has been made, that is considered favorable to a pacific foreign policy and greater freedom of the press.

The French Emperor, in his usual new-year's address to the diplomatic corps, expressed great pleasure at the efforts made by the governments of Europe to insure the continuance of peace, and his hope and confidence that the year 1869 would be as satisfactory as the one just closed, and would consolidate the peace necessary to the progress and welfare of civilized nations. Victor Emanuel, also, gave utterance to similar views.

Spain.—The revolution in this country proceeds with far less violence and disorder than could have been expected from such a people so circumstanced. Still, it is impossible as yet to foresee the final result. The people seem to be pretty equally divided between Monarchy and Republicanism; but the probability now is, that the Monarchists in the coming election, which is to decide the form of the government, will outvote the Republicans. The Provisional Government has passed some important acts in favor of freedom and religious toleration, but will not, it is said, even consider the question of selling Cuba on any terms to the United States.

Greece and Turkey.—The prospect of war between these countries seems to have awakened serious alarm among the great powers of Europe, lest it should lead to another imbroglia like that which ended in the Crimean war. Turkey ordered all Greeks from her territory, and Greece was making preparations on a large scale for war with the Sultan. In this state of affairs rumors were for some time rife of a general congress of leading powers at Paris, to consider and devise means for averting the threatened conflict. The result is yet uncertain; but the general impression is strong that no serious war, if any at all, will come of this embroilment.

South-American Wars.—These are so frequent and general as to be comparatively little heeded; but that by Brazil and the Argentine Republic against Paraguay, is an exception. It has been in progress for some years, and seems no nearer a close. Our own government, and some in Europe, have been inclined to interpose as mediators, in the hope of stopping it, but without success. It is said that Brazil has dispatched recruiting agents to Europe, and that two hundred and fifty recruits from England lately arrived.

DOMESTIC.—Congress reassembled Dec. 4th, and was flooded in both Houses with a multitude of important bills and resolutions, sufficient to engross their whole time to March 4th. The President's message, especially that part understood to be in favor of virtually repudiating the public debt, was severely censured in the House of Representatives by a vote of 135 to 29.

The President's Message.—Is in the main a repetition of his views on reconstruction, and the proper treatment of the rebel States; on an amendment of the Constitution of the United States, so as to choose a President and Vice-President directly by the people, and make their term six years instead of four, and to restrict the term of Federal Judges within a specified period, instead of being for life.

The message, also, embraced the usual abstract of the several departments. **Public Lands.**—During the last year, 6,555,742 acres have been disposed of, less by 385,372 acres than in the previous year. The cash receipts during the same period amounted to \$1,632,745. There are 1,405,366,678 acres still at the disposal of the government.

Receipts and Expenditures.—The receipts from customs, amounted to \$164,464,600; from lands, \$1,348,715; direct taxes, \$1,788,146; internal revenue, \$191,087,589; miscellaneous sources, \$46,949,033—total, exclusive of loans, \$405,678,083. The expenditures for the civil service were \$60,011,019; for pensions and Indians, \$27,883,069; for the army, \$123,246,649; for the navy, \$25,775,503; interest on the public debt, \$140,424,045—total expenditures, \$377,340,285.

The Public Debt increased \$35,625,102. Of this increase, \$24,152,000 is chargeable to the Pacific railroads, and \$7,200,000 to the purchase of Russian America. Within the same period, \$44,060,575 were paid as bounties to the soldiers and sailors of the late war. On the first instant the debt amounted to \$2,539,031,844, an increase of \$11,902,292 in December.

The Post Office.—Postage stamps and stamped envelopes produced \$14,066,139. The revenues fall short of expenses. The deficiency for the coming year is estimated at \$6,740,000.

The Precious Metals.—The aggregate product of gold and silver, from 1849 to 1867, is stated to have amounted to \$1,174,000,000, and during the same period, the net exports of specie were \$741,000,000; an excess of product over exports, of \$433,000,000.

Amnesty Proclamation.—December 25th, as deemed a fitting time, President Johnson issued a proclamation of full pardon and amnesty to all engaged in the late rebellion. There are some doubts about its legal bearing on some points; but the result is expected to be, that none of the ex-rebels will ever be put on trial for treason—an instance of clemency unparalleled in the world's history, as out of millions of rebels arrayed for more than four years against the government, not one of them all has yet been even tried for the crime.

MISCELLANEOUS. — Anthracite Coal.—According to an article in a Baltimore paper, the first man to utilize anthracite coal in the Wyoming valley, Pennsylvania, was a blacksmith who used it in his smithy. This was in 1708; and it was not until a hundred years afterward that a citizen of Wilkesbarre used it as grate-coal to heat his dwelling. Even as late as 1820 the mining of this coal was a thing of merely incidental pursuit; for the production of that year did not exceed one ton per day. In 1866 the annual production had reached 34,000 tons per diem, or 12,000,000 tons annually; and it may be fair to presume that at least forty millions of tons of anthracite have been sent into the market, the Schuylkill region furnishing alone 13,508,626 tons.

HOOSAC TUNNEL.—The completion of this great enterprise has been undertaken by an English company from Montreal, to lay 4½ miles of track through the mountain for \$4,592,000, and finish it in five years, though they hope to do so much sooner.

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS are fast becoming, have already become, very important auxiliaries in all Christian work. It seems from a recent statement, that the first association was formed in London, June 6, 1844; the first in America, at Cincinnati, in 1848, and from these the institution has spread over both hemispheres. The first general convention in this country was at Buffalo, in 1854; and at the last in Detroit, 1868, there were reported 535 associations, with 70,000 members.

These young Christians we may expect to find in the van of every enterprise, whether of benevolence or reform. May we not hope they will ere long take an active, leading part in the cause of peace? In this hope we have already sent our periodical *gratis* to more than 200 of these associations in our country, and would gladly, if we could, to them all.